Large House Review Study Committee

Planning Board Meeting, January 10, 2017

Issues

- New residential construction is often built close to the maximum size allowed determined by setback, height, and lot coverage requirements.
- Abutters are impacted by these larger-scale houses when views are changed, trees removed, shadows cast, and drainage is modified.
- Neighborhood fabric changes with new scales, often loss of trees, and changes in topography.
- New construction replaces more moderately-sized housing stock which changes community diversity.
- Many residents perceive that replacement homes are "just too big".

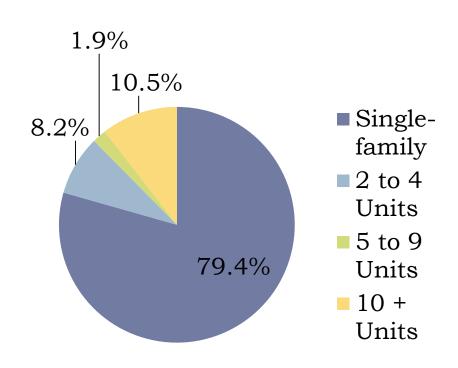
Study Committee Goals

- Respond to resident concerns about the issue of teardowns and replacement housing.
- Explore the specific effects of zoning on regulating this issue.
- Investigate other communities' responses.
- Make recommendations for zoning changes to reduce the negative impacts of replacement housing on neighborhood character.
- Analyze house size in relation to lot size, complementing the Town's other zoning dimensional controls.
- Make zoning changes fair and easy to understand.

Needham's Housing Inventory – Types of Properties

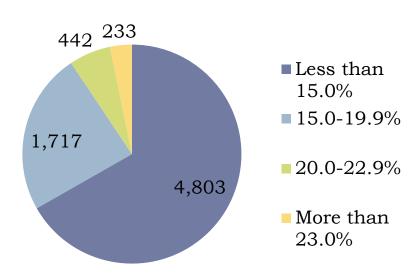
- About 11,000 total units.
- ▶ 76% single-family detached.
- ▶ 82.5% owner-occupied.
- About 25% are nonconforming for either lot size or frontage.
- Approximately 17% are nonconforming for both lot size and frontage.

Distribution of Units per Structure



Needham's Housing Inventory – Lot Area Coverage

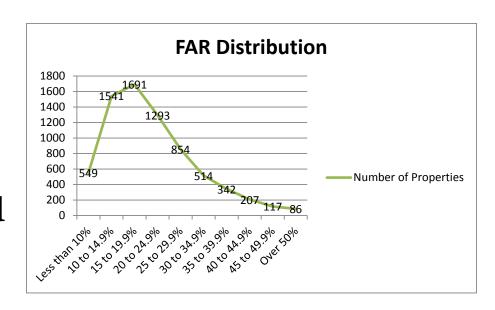
Distribution of Properties by Lot Coverage



- (Footprint of house as a % of lot area.)
- ▶ 2/3 of properties had lot coverage percentages of less than 15%.
- Median lot coverage of 13% compared to 23% for studied replacement units.
- Only 80 properties had lot coverage of more than 25%.

Needham's Housing Inventory – Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

- (Floor area divided by the lot area.)
- Median FAR of about 20%.
- ▶ 30% of properties had an FAR above 25%.
- Only 5.6% had an FAR above 40%.



Needham's Housing Inventory – Housing Costs

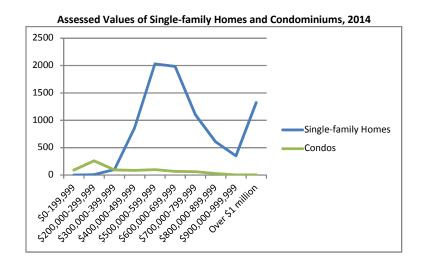
Median single-family home prices have increased by 241% since 1990.

- ▶ 1990 = \$245,000
- **2000 = \$436,250**
- **2010 = \$632,500**
- **2016 = \$835,000**

Median rent of \$1,449 based on 2015 census estimates.

Market rent for new 2bedroom apts at Charles River Landing is \$3,941 to \$6,742.

More than 12% of households pay more than half their income on housing costs.



Teardown Activity

Period	# New Residential Single-family Units	# Residential Units Demolished	Net New Units
2010 through 2012	203	186 92% of new units	17
2013	104	96 92% of all new units	8
2014 through 5- 12-14	42	30 71% of all new units	12
5-13-14 through 3-30-15	81	55 68% of all new units	26
Total	430	367 85% of all new units	63

Teardown Activity

- Smaller homes with median size of 1,536 square feet and median value of \$600,000.*
- Replacement homes had a median size of 4,830 square feet and prices well above \$1 million.*
- Two-Family rental units that are reconstructed typically are converted to high-end condominiums and do not remain rental properties.
- ▶ Teardown properties had a median FAR of 15% compared to 44% for replacement homes.*
- * Analysis includes all finished space minus the garage for 30 teardowns and replacement properties built during about the first 5 months of 2014.

Proposed Changes to Zoning

- Encourage more building elements and architectural diversity
- Modify setbacks
- Increase Lot Area Coverage in tandem with applying a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculation
- Change building height measurement method

Allow Elements in Setbacks

- Increase and encourage architectural variety by allowing various elements to be built within the front and side setbacks.
- Roof overhangs up to 24 inches.



Allow Elements in Setbacks

Bay windows up to 8 feet long – maximum overall at 25% of that side of house.





Allow Elements in Setbacks

 Covered porches can project into setback to maximum of 50 square feet.





Front

- Increase from 20 to 25 feet measured to the nearest portion of the building or structure, with an allowance of 6 inches of siding or trim.
- Limit 2-car garages within 35 feet to $1\frac{1}{2}$ stories.

Rear

Remain at 20 feet.

Compliant garage with proposed regulations



Side

- Measure to nearest portion of building or structure with an allowance of 6 inches of siding or trim.
- Conforming lot increase from 12.5/14 feet to 14/16 feet.
- ▶ 32 feet of structure allowed at 14 foot setback line, the rest offset 2 feet to 16 feet.
- Non-conforming lot (for frontage only) increase from 10 feet to 12 feet.
- Maximum 32 feet of structure allowed along a side yard, the rest offset an additional 2 feet.

Compliant garages with proposed regulations







Non-compliant garages with proposed regulations







Increase Lot Area Coverage

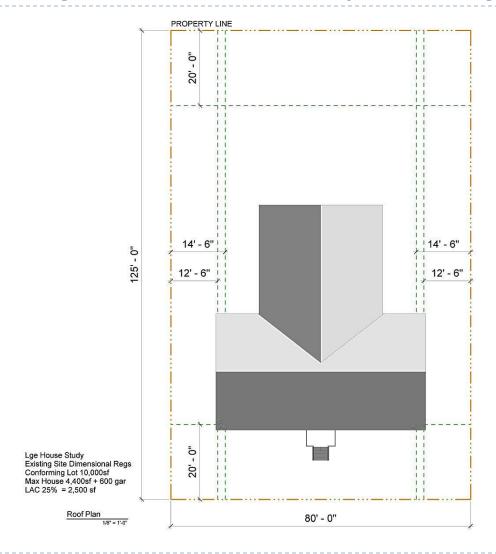
- ▶ Lot Area Coverage Increase to 28% to allow for additional design flexibility.
- This is only in conjunction with instituting a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculation.

Add Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

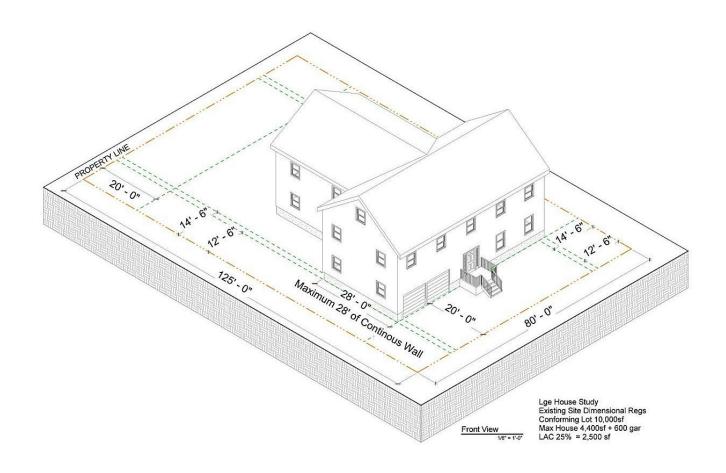
Basic Assumptions: First floor includes 2-car Garage, LR, DR, Kitchen, Family Room, Mudroom and Study. Second floor includes 4 BRs, 2-3 Baths, Laundry.

Lot Size in Square Feet	FAR	
Lot size < 12,000	.38	
Lot size ≥ 12,000	.36	

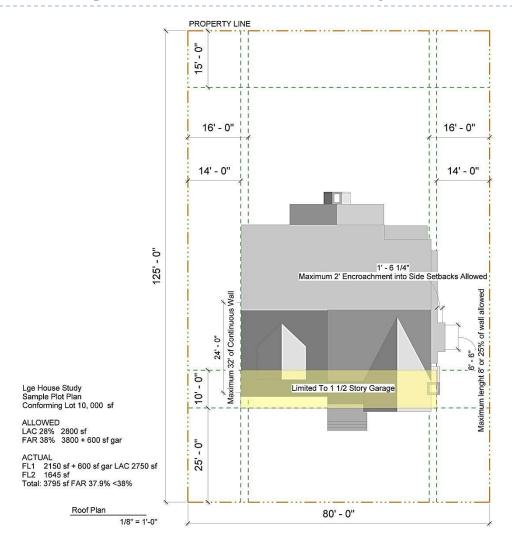
Existing Regulations: Conforming Lot



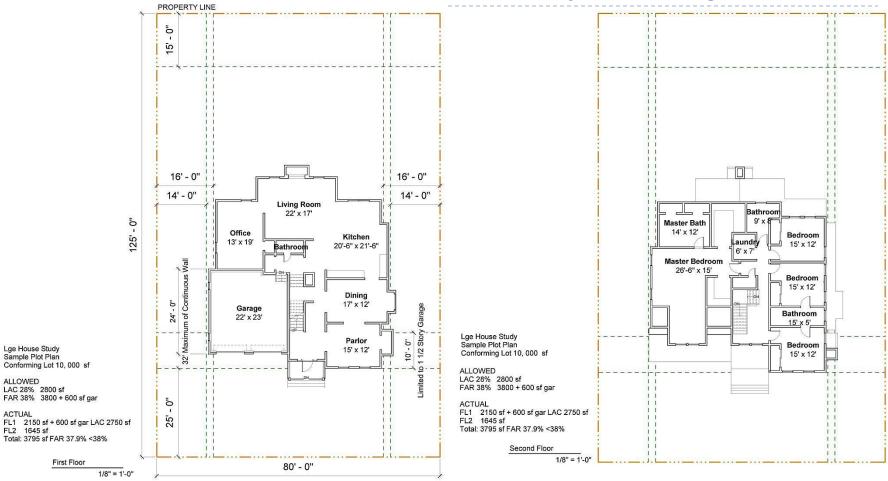
Existing Regulations: Conforming Lot



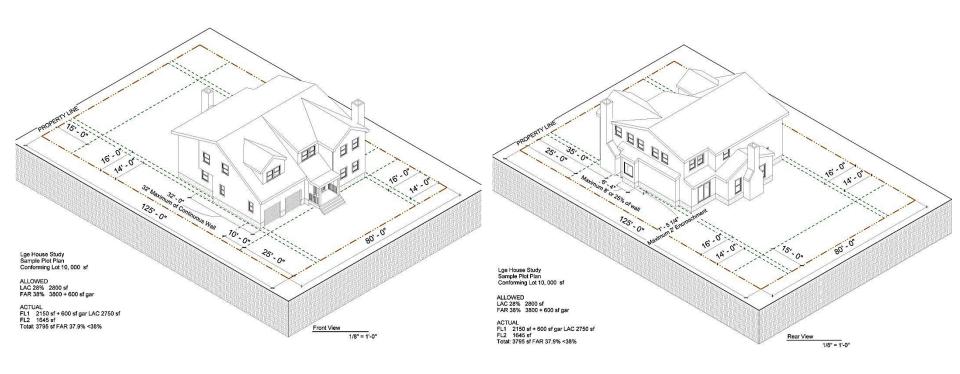
Proposed Regulations: Conforming Lot



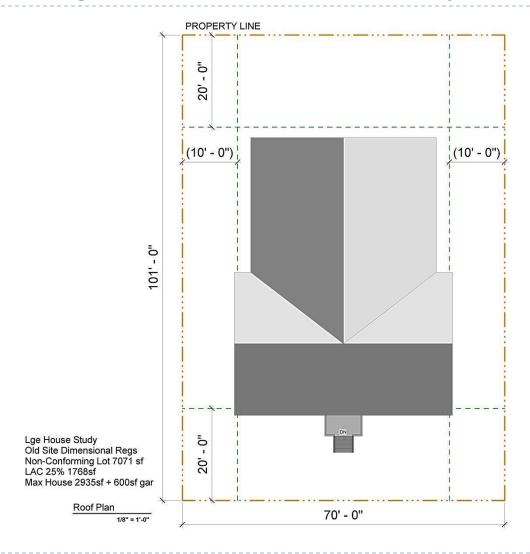
Proposed Regulations: Conforming Lot



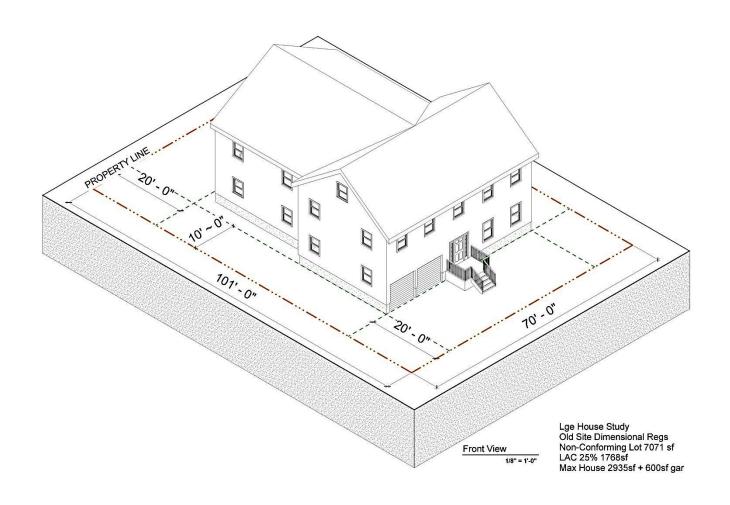
Proposed Regulations: Conforming Lot



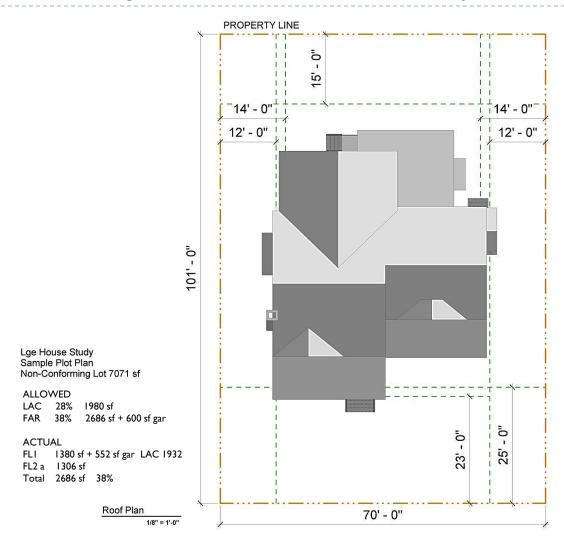
Existing Regulations: Non-conforming Lot



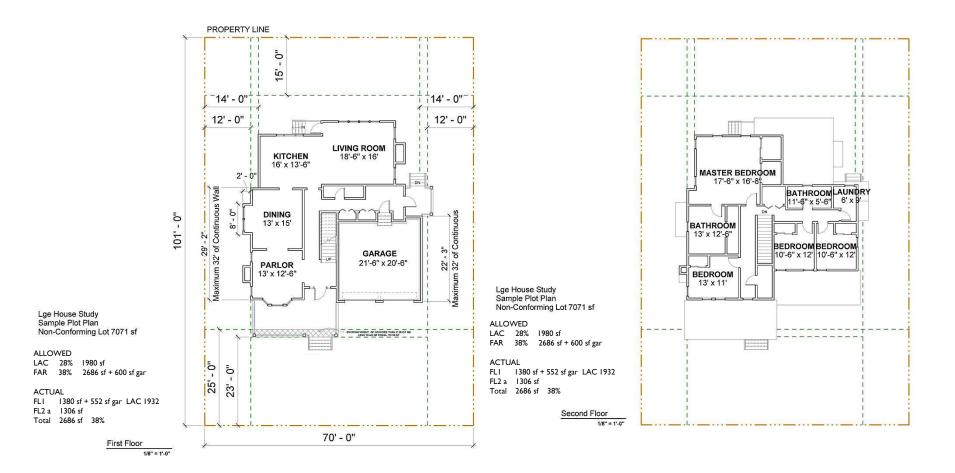
Existing Regulations: Non-conforming Lot



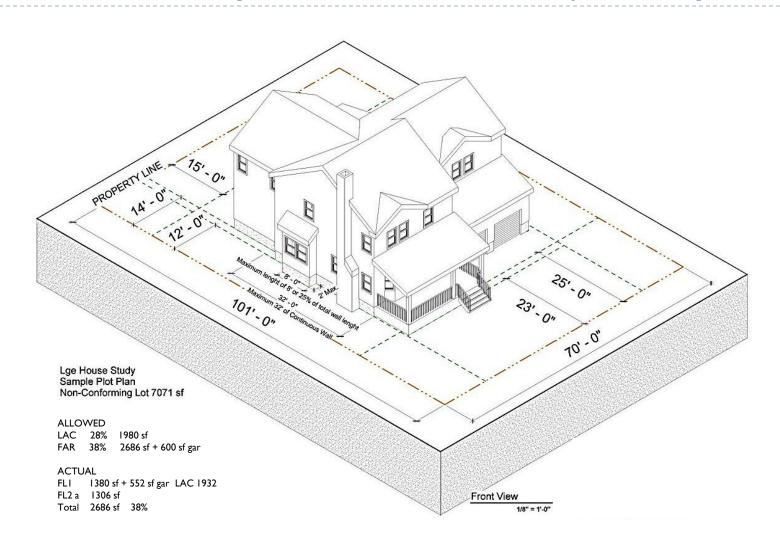
Proposed Regulations: Non-conforming Lot



Proposed Regulations: Non-conforming Lot



Proposed Regulations: Non-conforming Lot





Lge House Study

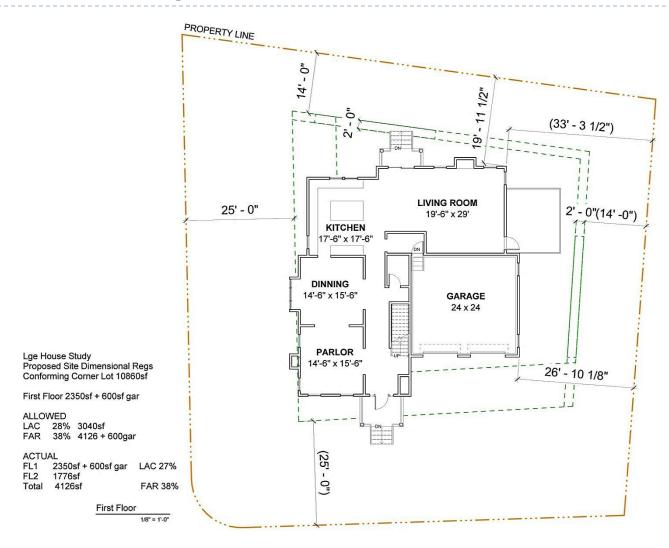
1776sf 4126sf

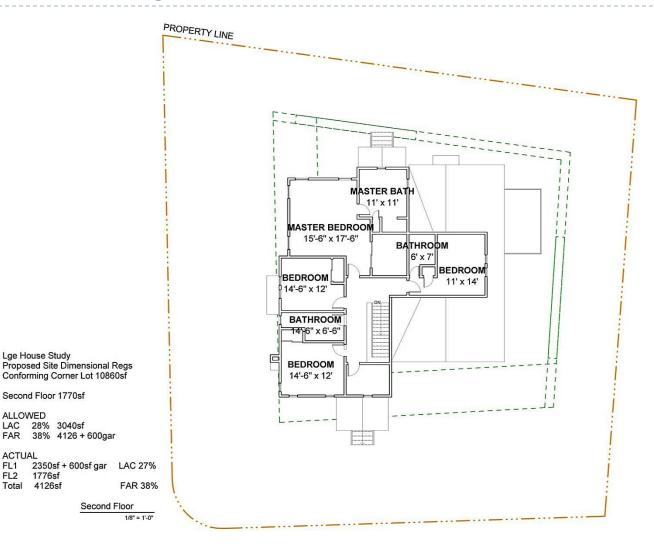
ALLOWED LAC 28% 3040sf FAR 38% 4126 + 600gar

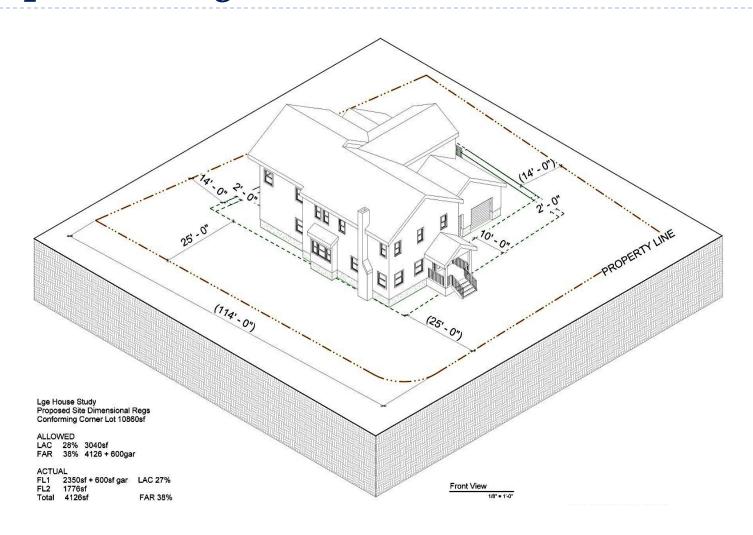
Proposed Site Dimensional Regs

Roof Plan

Conforming Corner Lot 10860sf







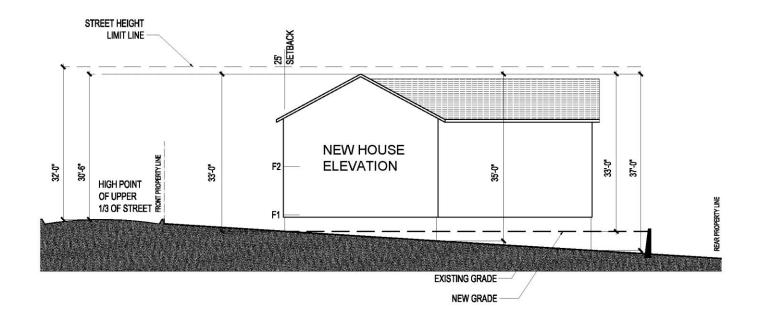
Change Height Measurement Method

Two options are offered

- Measure from average existing grade or average new grade, whichever is lower. Height limit is 35 feet.
- Measure from a single point in the street centerline as the average of the highest 1/3 of the properties' street frontage. Height limit is 32 feet.

Building Height – Downhill Lot Example

AVERAGE HEIGHT TO EXISTING GRADE: 35.5'
AVERAGE HEIGHT TO NEW GRADE: 33'
HEIGHT FROM HIGHEST 1/3 OF STREET: 31'



HEIGHT MEASUREMENT

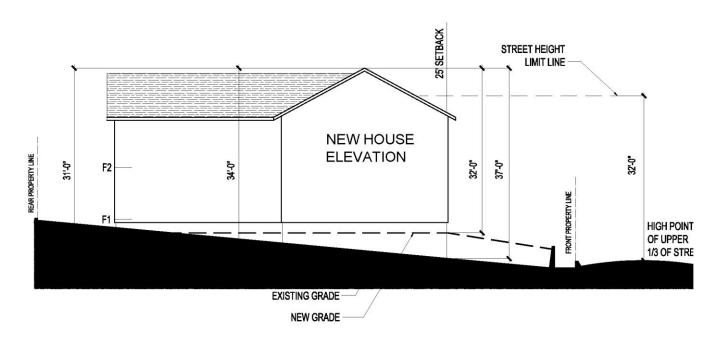
EXAMPLE B: DOWNHILL LOT

Building Height – Uphill Lot Example

AVERAGE HEIGHT TO EXISTING GRADE: 34'

AVERAGE HEIGHT TO NEW GRADE: 32.3'

HEIGHT FROM HIGHEST 1/3 OF STREET: 37'



HEIGHT MEASUREMENT

EXAMPLE A: UPHILL LOT

FIRST FLOOR 8' ABOVE STREET

Additions to Existing Single and Two-family Dwellings

Houses seeking to do an addition will be subject to the proposed regulations for new construction: Lot Coverage, Floor Area Ratio and Height.

Provided that less than 50% of the existing structure, excluding a single story garage, is demolished, houses non-conforming relative to front and side yard setback will be allowed exceptions to the proposed front and side yard setback requirements. The setback requirements for the addition will be based on the setbacks at the time of the houses construction with some limitations.

Front Yard:

The front yard setback will be 20 feet or the furthest extent of the existing structure, whichever is greater.

Side Yard:

The side yard setback for structures built prior to July 1, 1999 will be 10 feet or the furthest extent of the existing structure, whichever is greater.

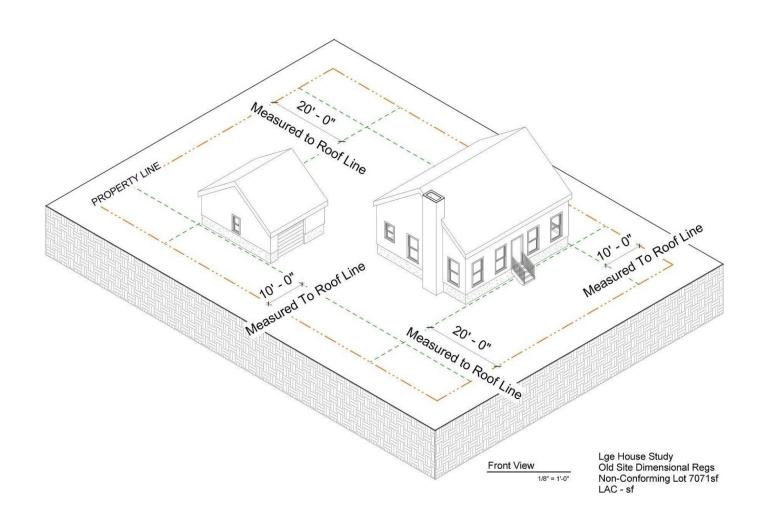
The side yard setback for structures built between July 1, 1999 and May 1, 2017 will be 12.5 feet or the furthest extent of the existing structure, whichever is greater.

Structures where there is more than 50% demolition of the existing structure may be eligible for the above-noted exemptions by applying for a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

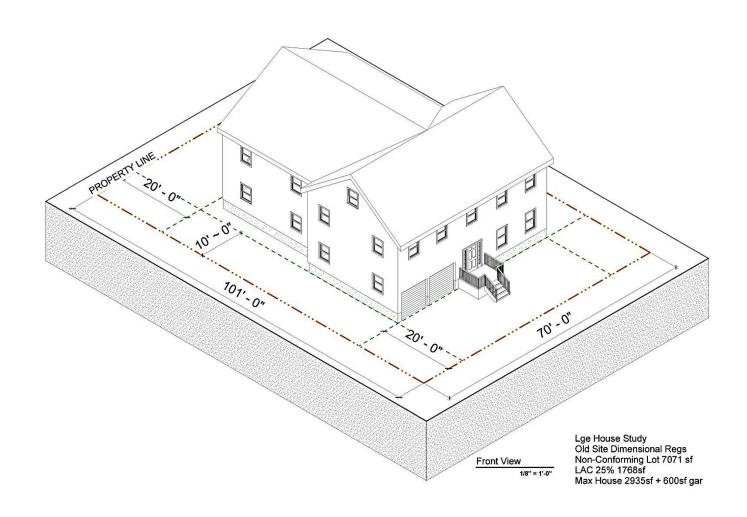
Summary of Changes

- Encourage more building elements and architectural diversity
- Modify setbacks
- Increase Lot Area Coverage in tandem with applying a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculation
- Change building height measurement method

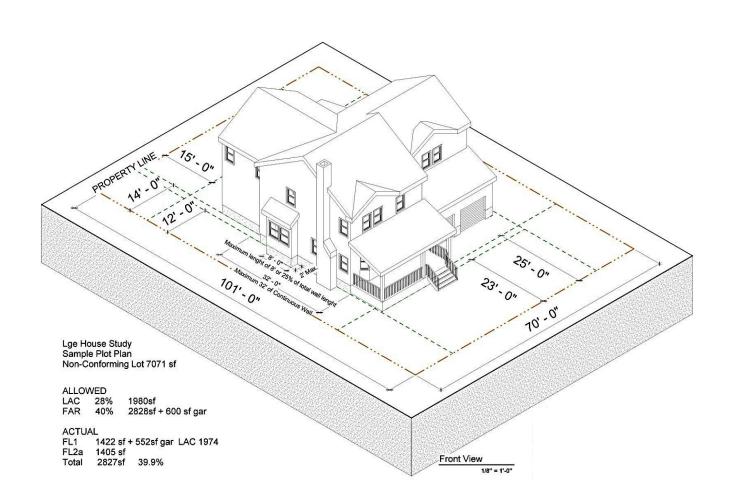
Typical Existing Non-conforming Lot



Maximum Replacement House for Nonconforming Lot under Existing Regs



Maximum Replacement House under Proposed Regs for Non-conforming Lot



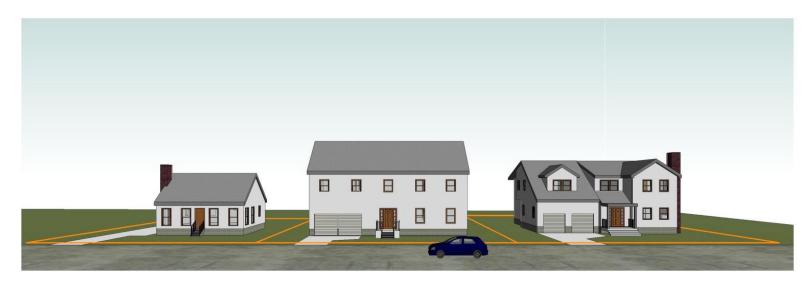
Summary of Changes – Non-conforming Lot



TYPICAL EXISTING LOT NON-COMFORMING MAXIMUM REPLACEMENT 7170 sf Lot LAC 25% 1768 sf 2935 + 600 sf gar MAX REPLACEMENT HOUSE 7170 sf Lot

LAC 28% FAR 40% 2827 sf + 600 sf gar

Summary of Changes – Conforming Lot



TYPICAL EXISTING CONFORMING LOT

MAXIMUM REPLACEMENT HOUSE UNDER CURRENT REGULATIONS

10,000 sf Lot LAC 25% 2500 sf 4,400 sf + 600 sf gar MAX REPLACEMENT HOUSE UNDER PROPOSED REGS

10,000 sf Lot LAC 28% FAR 38% 3795 sf + 600 sf gar

Thank you.

Dimensional Regulations: Single Residence B & General Residence Zoning Districts

10,000

10,000

10,000

Single Residence B & General

Residence Zoning **Districts** (post-1986 lots)

& General

Districts (pre-1986 lots)

Single Residence B **Zoning District**

(New Construction)

General Residence **Zoning District**

(New Construction)

45

 Minimum Lot Area (sq ft)	Minimum Frontage (feet)	Front Setback	Side Setback	Rear Setback	Maximum Floor Area Ratio	Maximum Lot Coverage	Maximum Stories	Maximum Height
(3411)	(1661)	(feet)	(feet)	(feet)	(FAR)	%		(IGGI)

12.5 a

10

12.5 * a

12.5 * a

10

10

20

20

NR

NR

NR

NR

Single Residence B 10,000 80 20 Residence Zoning

80

80

* 10' side setback for non-conforming lots

^a Increased to 14.5' for any length over 28'

80

20

20

20

Planning Board Meeting, January 10, 2017

30%-35%

NR

NR

25%-30%

2.5

2.5

2.5

2.5

35

35

35

35

Definition of New Construction

- 1. Any construction of a structure on a vacant lot.
- 2. Any construction which involves demolition of more than 50% (fifty percent) of the exterior frame or exterior envelope of an existing structure.
- Any addition to an existing one-story structure which results in a gross floor area greater than 240% (two hundred forty percent) of the gross floor area of the existing structure.
- 4. Any addition to an existing one and one-half story structure which results in a gross floor area greater than 220% (two hundred twenty percent) of the gross floor area of the existing structure.
- Any addition to an existing two-story or two and one-half story structure which results in a gross floor area greater than 175% (one hundred seventy-five percent) of the gross floor area of the existing structure.

For purposes of calculating the percentages of any construction, addition or demolition under this definition, all construction shall be taken into account which commenced, or could have commenced, pursuant to an issued permit within two (2) years prior to the date of any request for any permit to construct, reconstruct, alter, add, extend or otherwise structurally change any structure.

Table of Lot Size Ranges

	Lot Size (SF)	% Coverage	Allowable Coverage (SF)
	7500 or more	25	1875 or more
Single Pesidence B	7000-7499	26	1820-1950
Single Residence B	6500-6999	27	1755-1890
	6000-6499	28	1680-1820
	5500-5999	29	1595-1740
	5499 or less	30	1650 or less
	9000 or more	30	2700 or more
Conoral Posidones	8500-8999	31	2635-2790
General Residence	8000-8499	32	2560-2730
	7500-7999	33	2475-2640
	7000-7499	34	2380-2550
	6999 or less	35	2450 or less